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An Address

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE MASSACHUSETTS

AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY,

At the Brighton Cattle Show,

OCTOBER 17th, 1821.

BY HENRY COLMAN.

BOSTON:

WELLS AND LILLY—COURT-STREET.

1822.



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ANNUAL ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY,
AND FELLOW CITIZENS,

I SHOULD have been glad, on this occasion, to have confined myself to the discussion of some single topic, connected with agriculture or domestic economy ; but the time allowed me to prepare for this duty, has been much too short to do this in a manner satisfactory to you or myself. I must therefore be permitted to take a wider range ; and here I beg leave, with all possible respect, to suggest to the Trustees of this Institution, that in general, and with the exception of those few distinguished cultivators, whom I have the honour to succeed in this duty, if they demand a crop that is worth harvesting, they should give us an opportunity to prepare the ground and sow the seed at least as early as the preceding spring ; but where every thing is to be done by forcing, they must be satisfied with that, which, through their great clemency, may answer for the occasion, but, as we are accustomed to say, ‘will not answer to keep.’ All I can do is to ask you to go with me into an old field, which we have often traversed, and determine what is best to be done with it ; what parts it is expedient at once to break up ; and by what means we may redeem it from its

present sterility ; what enemies we have to contend with, more injurious to the farmers prosperity than the Canada thistle ; and in fine, how we can render that, which is often offensive by its desolation, as beautiful and productive as God designed it should be.

I begin then by inquiring, What is essential to a farmer's prosperity ? We will stop a moment to determine, what we mean by a farmer's prosperity. I do not intend therefore merely his getting rich. Under certain restrictions, the acquisition of wealth is as much a duty as any thing else. It is a most important moral obligation, to provide by honest means for those, whom God has cast upon our care, and to increase our means of doing good in the community ; to these ends property is essential, and may be successfully applied. But where a man has no other object of pursuit than to be rich, and avarice becomes his ruling passion, he will not be happy, and is most likely to become dishonest. That farmer is prosperous, who is able by his own personal labour, and the produce of his husbandry, to provide for the ordinary wants of himself and his family ; to give his children a suitable education and establishment, in that situation in life, in which they are likely to be placed ; to keep himself free from the curse of debt and mortgage ; to maintain the character and assert the rights of an independent freeholder ; to contribute something every year to the improvement of his estate, and to that fund in reserve, which every prudent man ought, as far as possible, to provide against a season, when the accidents of life or the infirmities of old age may render it necessary to repose from his labours and cares. This is all the prosperity which a reasonable farmer ought to expect or wish ; and further than this, the acquisition of property and the exemption from constant care and hard labour are not to be desired. The condition of the man, whose situation I have now described, is favoured and enviable. It is a common complaint among farmers, who, Wesley says, I think unjustly, are more apt to

complain than any other class of men, that agriculture is an unprofitable business ; and there is no doubt that the value of the produce of our labour is not proportioned to the price of that labour ; an evil which, as our population increases, will rectify itself. But even in the present condition of things among us, if agriculture will not make us rich, it will be found, where it is properly managed, the source of as much prosperity as reasonable men ought to desire. I have myself known so many instances of such successful husbandry, in parts of the country remote from market, and where the soil is extremely rough and unpromising ; instances in which, men, who began life with no other property than the frock on their backs, and the spade in their hands, have brought up and well educated numerous families, and acquired not only a competency but an independency, that there can remain no doubt on the subject. Let us inquire then what are the means most likely to ensure success to the farmer? Next, what circumstances are most likely to defeat his success? I will endeavour to be as brief as possible, because a long talk in the morning is a violation of one of the most important rules of domestic economy. However, we have it from high authority, there is a time to speak as well as a time to keep silence.

The way to wealth, says DR. FRANKLIN, is as plain as the way to market. The whole science of getting rich is comprehended in two words, industry and frugality. These indeed are the farmers best friends ; and with these, under the blessing of providence, he may command success. This is no new discovery. The farmer with us must labour ; in our climate the earth gives us nothing without cultivation. This is not an evil, but a blessing. The health is preserved, the powers of the body and mind are strengthened, our capacity for enjoyment is increased by labour ; and constant useful and honest engagement is an unfailing source of satisfaction and pleasure. The most important inquiry to the farmer is, how he may best apply

this labour? An obvious defect in our system of husbandry, which has been often adverted to, but of which we cannot be too often reminded until there ceases to be any occasion for the remark, is the large size of our farms, compared with the amount of labour, which we are able to bestow upon them. We apply little labour to a great deal of land; the rule ought to be reversed; and we should apply much labour to little land. The same labour and manure, which is commonly spent upon two acres, if applied to one acre of ground, would often give double the crop and leave the land in better condition. A farmer should not therefore be so solicitous to enlarge his farm, as he should be to cultivate what he has, to as high degree as it is capable of being cultivated with advantage; this should form the limits of his desires. His farm should be proportioned to the quantity of labour which he can give to it; and until he has discovered that more labour would be actually injurious or useless, he need not desire the extension of his territories. But suppose, you say, that his farm is already according to this rule much too large; what shall he do with it? I answer, if he cannot or will not sell it, it would be better to let a part of it lie waste; or if his pride is too much concerned to do this, let him plant it with acorns, or walnuts, or chesnuts, or beachnuts, or locusts, a branch of agriculture, if so it may be called, to which little attention has been paid among us; and which would in many cases be an appropriation of a part of our land, highly productive to those who are to come after us. An early attention to this subject is strongly urged by common prudence, when we take into view the serious want of timber and fuel to which we must presently be subjected, if this provision is longer delayed; unless we choose to be governed by the *benevolent* principle which some man is said to have avowed, 'who would do nothing for posterity because posterity had done nothing for him.'

The next subject of importance to the farmer is manure. The turning up and breaking the soil thoroughly, the reducing it into fine parts and keeping it light and loose, the exposure of it to the sun, and air, and frost, and dew, are all of the first importance ; but tillage will not do every thing. Manure is essential to the growth of vegetables as supplying a considerable proportion of their nourishment ; and as exciting their powers to receive, and the powers of the earth on its part to supply, this nourishment. It is a prominent defect in our agriculture, that our lands are not enough manured. We have not sufficient manure ; and what we have, we spread over too great a surface. The remedy for the last error is obviously within our power ; we must cultivate no more land than what we can manure well ; and, by well, I mean, not as much, in the cant phrase, *as will do*, but as much as the land will bear. We may apply more than is necessary ; but there is no occasion to give our farmers a caution on this head. We may apply it improperly, at an improper season, in an unfit state, to a crop and soil to which the kind of manure, which we apply, is not adapted. These matters must be determined by inquiry and experiment, of which we ought to avail ourselves. But the great evil is a want of manure ; and this want might on almost every farm be supplied by means within the farmer's own power. On the greater part of the farms in the country, with the exception of those in the immediate neighbourhood of our large towns, where the subject is better understood, it is not extravagant to say, that not a third part of the manure is made, which might be made. Very few of them have any thing like a compost heap ; the night soil is not used ; the drainings of the sink are suffered to waste themselves on the ground in a manner highly offensive to the sight and smell, and are considered of no farther value than as supplying a spot for the growth of a few cucumbers ; in but few instances is any pains taken for the preservation of the stale of the cattle ; the place of deposit

for the manure is seldom covered, and it is often so situated, as that the greater part is wasted by its exposure to the sun and rain; in many places the farmer suffers his swine to range at large in the highways; and the tops of his potatoes and other vegetables are wasted on the place where they grew; and the scrapings of decayed leaves and chips, and the deposits of pond holes and ditches are deemed not worth the gathering. In all these particulars and many others, which it would be easy to enumerate, the farmer is obviously neglecting and wasting his most valuable resources.

Next to labour and manure, frugality in living is essential to a farmer's success. It is not necessary that on this subject I should be particular; but there are many things in our habits and manners, which might be amended. There are few of our farmers, who, if they will look into the account of their family expenses, and every prudent man will keep an exact account, will not discover, that foreign luxuries constitute a very considerable item of expenditure; and it would seem a most important rule for every farmer, to live as far as possible within his own resources; to depend upon the produce of his farm for the subsistence of his family, as far as it can be applied to this purpose. A good farm, if discreetly managed, will supply almost every thing that is necessary in this respect; and the produce of a farm, thus used, is of more value to the farmer than to send it to market. There is one topick connected with this subject on which we cannot be too often admonished, that is, our extravagance in the use of fuel. We are in this respect extremely wasteful. It seems highly immoral, in many parts of our country, to consume more wood than is necessary, when we consider with what difficulty for a long time among us the waste of wood will be supplied; and how greatly the burdens of the poor are increased by extravagance in this matter on the part of the rich. We have yet much to learn on this subject in the construction of

our houses, of our fire places, of our apparatus for cooking, and in the proper management and expenditure of our fuel. ‘I have ascertained,’ says Judge Cooper, who is well qualified to speak on this subject, ‘that charcoal used and not wasted will save three fourths of the expense of cooking in a kitchen. When wood is charred, nothing is driven off but acid and water, which are incombustible; hence if you weigh a piece of wood equal to one pound, and weigh a piece of charcoal of the same size equal to a quarter of a pound, you will find that you are at the expense in a common fire of burning previously a sufficient quantity of fuel to drive off three quarters of a pound, the difference in weight of incombustible fluid before the piece of wood becomes fuel itself. One dollar in charcoal in the common shallow French cooking stoves, will go further in cooking, broiling, frying, boiling, stewing, and baking, than four dollars in wood in a common kitchen fire place. In charcoal also, from a diminution of weight, the expense of carriage is materially lessened, and you can afford to get it from a cheaper country.’

All that I have undertaken on this occasion is to suggest a few hints, which I submit to the consideration of intelligent and practical men to use as they deem expedient; I therefore pass to another matter, which is conducive, if not essential, to the farmer’s prosperity, I mean knowledge, skill, and experience. Agriculture is an important branch of natural philosophy. Experience is always a safer guide and a more competent instructor than theory; but we owe much in agriculture to the inquiries of intelligent and learned men. The nature and properties of different soils, the composition and uses of various manures, the organization of plants, the influence of the atmosphere, and of light and heat upon the growth of vegetables, the structure of animals and the improvement of the breed of animals, are all matters of profound philosophical investigation; and much as common farmers are disposed in general to deride learn-

ing in an agriculturist, they are indebted to the efforts of learned men for almost all the improvements which have been made in agriculture and domestic economy. Agriculture indeed is a science and an art to be studied and learnt as much as any other art or science; without knowledge and experience, men cannot expect to be successful in it; they labour to great disadvantage; and can do nothing more than pursue the same track, which their ancestors for centuries have trodden before them.

The farmer therefore should be constantly inquisitive, that he may obtain a better knowledge of his art, from books, and men, and from his own observation and experience. Every intelligent farmer should keep a journal of his husbandry, a history of the season, an account of the sowing and gathering of the produce of his grounds, and especially of the result of any experiments in cultivation, which he may make; it would be attended with no difficulty; it would be a source of pleasure and satisfaction to him; and might sometimes lead to valuable improvements; and he owes it to the community often to communicate the result of such experiments. We should be ashamed of those prejudices, which hinder our inquiries, and of that illiberality, which is sometimes discovered towards those rich and patriotic gentlemen, who devote a great deal of their time and property to experiments in agriculture, unprofitable indeed to themselves, but of the greatest public benefit. Nothing is so fatal to the progress of improvement, as prejudice, and the ridiculous conceit that we are already as wise as we can be. There is no principle in agriculture that we should not be willing to bring to the test of experiment; and there can be little doubt that many principles, which we now deem firmly established, will be discovered to be mere prejudices upon further examination. I had an instance of this a few days since on the ground of an intelligent and judicious farmer in my neighbourhood.* It has become an axiom among farmers that an orchard will not flourish if planted where one has formerly stood; yet he

* B. Goddard, Esq. Brookline.

showed me an orchard of ten years growth, planted where the old trees were grubbed up, as flourishing as the rest of his cultivation; and that, if I should point you to his farm, you would say, was as much so as could be desired. But experiments are important not merely in correcting what is false, but in ascertaining what is practicable. We have yet much to learn as to the actual capacities of the earth to yield; and some recent experiments have demonstrated in this respect what, but for this evidence, would have been deemed incredible. A member of this society* has proved that more than one hundred and ten bushels of Indian corn may be obtained at a single crop from one acre of our ground; and an intelligent friend † has assured me that he has raised in his garden upon two square rods of ground twelve bushels of potatoes, which is at the rate of nine hundred and sixty bushels to the acre. The experiments on the subject of soiling of cattle of another distinguished cultivator,‡ to whom I refer always with singular respect and pleasure, as a man worthy of the days of Cincinnatus, seem likely to prove of the highest benefit to our husbandry, and to produce a new era in our agriculture; since this practice promises a certain means, within every man's power, of procuring a competent supply of one of the best kinds of manure.

Nothing indeed is more likely to increase the farmer's prosperity than inquiry and experiment, and a knowledge of the inquiries and experiments of others. We have already reaped and are likely still further to reap the greatest benefits from the excitement to agricultural inquiries and experiments, produced by the patriotic exertions of this society. The exhibitions of this day, and of preceding years, afford a strong testimony in their favour; and the various agricultural experiments to which their premiums have led, and the valuable information detailed in their reports, and the important and successful attempts, which have been induced by

* Hon. J. Hunnewell, Watertown. † Rev. James Flint, Salem.

‡ Hon. Josiah Quincy.

their patronage, to improve our stock of domestic animals by the introduction of the best breeds of foreign countries, have conferred incalculable benefit on the Commonwealth, and may be regarded by every citizen of Massachusetts, with pride and pleasure.

I have already, I fear, detained you too long; but I promised to say something of the principal obstacles to a farmer's success; and there is indeed one, which so greatly transcends every other, and which is such a prolific source of wretchedness, degradation, and ruin to many of our farmers, that I shall confine my remarks to that. I am satisfied, it is well understood that I mean the abuse of spirituous liquors.

I confess, fellow citizens, that I am appalled by the magnitude of this evil; which is not indeed monopolised by the farmers, but extends to every class and threatens to overwhelm us with wretchedness and pauperism.* From the returns of the Marshals in 1810, it appeared that no less than 25,499,382 gallons of ardent spirits were distilled that year, of which were exported 133,483 gallons, leaving 25,365,899 gallons to be consumed at home. The same year about 8,000,000 gallons of rum and other distilled liquors were imported to this country, which, being added to the above, produced an amount of 33,365,899 gallons for our home consumption in a single year. Since that time it admits not a doubt that there has been a steady and rapid increase. This amount when divided among our population, excepting slaves, who are not allowed the use of ardent spirits, and children

* During the last year, a Report was presented to the legislature of New-Hampshire, respecting paupers. In this it was stated, that in 1800 the annual expenditure on that item amounted to 17,000 dollars. In 1819, although the population had not increased more than one fourth, yet the cost of the poor was 80,000 dollars; "a ratio of increase, which will double the expenditures in less than five years." In consequence of this alarming discovery, "the Committee reported a bill, providing, that no person between the ages of seven years and seventy years, having common ability to labour, should be maintained at the public expense; and that *no person, who shall be reduced to poverty by habitual drunkenness, shall be supported by any town.*"

under ten years of age, would give an allowance to each person on an average of more than seven gallons and a half a year. Now when we except the female part of the community, who use but little, and a large part of the community, who use none at all, the quantity consumed by those who do drink is enormous. In the town of Boston, and we can say as much in favour of the morals of Boston as of any city whatever, if I am not misinformed, there are more than eight hundred licensed retailers of ardent spirit, and many, who by some evasion escape the law and sell without license. If we estimate the number of shops and drinking houses upon a population of upwards of forty thousand, we shall find that it gives one retailer of spirits to every fifty inhabitants, and allowing every family to consist of seven persons it is nearly one to every seven families. If we suppose each of these shops to sell at the rate of seventy five dollars worth of ardent spirits by the year, which is not a dollar and a half a week, and then allow, as I think it is fair to allow, that an equal amount is drunken in the families, purchased in larger quantities, the direct tax upon this single town for this single article, valuing it at one dollar per gallon, is not less than one hundred and twenty thousand dollars per year. This, you will say, is monstrous; but suppose that our calculations are extravagant, reduce them one half; is not an expenditure of eighty thousand dollars a year for such an object upon such a population, monstrous!* Now making the usual allowances for the influx of travellers and strangers into a large town, and of many vagabonds and vicious people, who seek the concealment of a city, and the facilities, which

* This estimate must be quite within bounds. "By the most accurate computation, there are 1680 licenses for retailing ardent spirits, in actual force, in the city of New York; making an average of one tippling house to every fourteen houses in this metropolis. And by adopting the mode of calculation used by the managers of the Society, for the prevention of Pauperism for the year 1819, to ascertain the sum annually expended in New York, in the consumption of spirituous liquors, we arrive at the frightful result, that, in 1820 the sum of \$1,893,011, was squandered in the use of this single article!"

it affords for depredation, and the quantity of ardent spirits consumed there, is not disproportioned to what is consumed in the towns in the country. But the actual cost of the liquor is by no means the whole nor the worst part of the expenditure. It has been ascertained by careful inquiry, that nearly four fifths of the tenants of our alms-houses and of paupers, who are supported by the town or state, have been reduced to beggary by their own intemperance or the intemperance of those on whom they depended.* The same remark applies to the convicts in our prisons. Its effects upon the agricultural part of the community are as disastrous as can well be imagined. I have known in one immediate neighbourhood seven estates of persons once of respectable standing in society, and most of them with families, mortgaged and lost, and their families reduced to beggary, solely by the intemperance of the fathers and husbands; and in a neighbouring state, I have witnessed with unmixed pain an extensive county, which twenty years ago was flourishing, now impoverished and desolated by the scourge of intemperance. But instances without number of the ruin and misery, which this vice brings with it, occur to every man, who will open his eyes. Where you see one of these grog shops established, one of these gates of perdition set open, there you see the work of ruin begun, and idleness

* The Report made to the Legislature of Massachusetts, the last winter session, consisting of Reports from several towns in the Commonwealth, states that in one of the towns it was found that thirteen-fourteenths of the poor, whose maintenance was a burden on the corporation, were brought to the alms-house, "either directly or indirectly, by intemperance." Another statement says "Intemperance is the most fruitful source of pauperism. More than half the adult persons who have been admitted to our work-house, for sixteen years, have been addicted to the excessive use of ardent spirits."

It is a fact, stated on the proper official authority, that, during the last year, of 87 patients admitted into the Hospital for the Insane at New York, "the insanity of 27 was caused by the intemperate use of ardent spirits."

In an Address delivered the last year at Roxbury, it is remarked "The bills of mortality declare, that the annual average of deaths in Massachusetts from intoxication alone, is 666."

and profligacy, and quarrels, and debt, and mortgage, and imprisonment, and poverty, following with inevitable certainty.* In a word the use of ardent spirits is to the community a source of more wretchedness, poverty and crimes, than all other causes combined. The farmer is not less in danger than any other person. Much habitual drunkenness has been produced, and many a farmer completely ruined, by allowing to himself and his hired labourers the use of ardent spirits.

I take upon me to say, on the highest medical authority, that none is necessary to the strength and vigour of the human constitution. Men, who drink no spirit whatever, can in fact perform more labour and suffer far less from exposure to the extremes of heat and cold, than those persons, who depend on the temporary stimulus of ardent spirits. They are not so liable to droop under the heat, nor to perish with the cold, as many facts have proved. The time has come when it may be laid down as a settled principle, a principle, which is in the last degree essential to our agricultural as well as moral prosperity, that no spirituous liquor is necessary to the labour of a farm; and none ought ever to be used on a farm.†

* Dr. Nichols in an address recently delivered at Danvers, gives the following valuable calculation. "There are but few labourers among us, who pay less than 50 cents a week, which amounts to a fraction over seven cents a day, for ardent spirits, &c. Instead of spending this for that which is not bread, place it in the SAVINGS BANK. At 5 per cent. compound interest, (the rate allowed,) it will amount in 5 years to 146 dollars 48 cents; in 10 years to \$333,94; in 15 years to \$573,93; in 20 years to \$881,12; in 30 years to \$1761,30. How much," he exclaims, "would this sum improve the condition of many among us, at the age of 50 years."

† It has long been imagined that the labouring classes could not sustain themselves under the weight of their daily employments, and especially in foundries and large manufacturing establishments, where they are much exposed to heat, and breathe a confined atmosphere, without the regular use of ardent spirits. The results of an important experiment made, during the last season, by Mr. James P. Allaine, of the City of New York, establish the fallacy of this opinion.

"Mr. Allaine is the proprietor, of a large foundry at Corlaer's Hook. During the last season he employed upwards of sixty workmen, more than thirty of

The practice of some of our farmers in this matter deserves to be mentioned with the warmest commendation; and as likely to aid in a high degree the interests of humanity as well as of agriculture. I know several cases, in which farming is conducted with perfect success, to the mutual satisfaction of the labourer and his employer, without any spirituous liquor being allowed, and none used, excepting in the season of haying, and then in the most moderate quantities, because it is at the expense of the labourers themselves. One of these is a case, in which the farmer has at least seven hundred, and another nearly two thousand, days' labour done in the course of the year; and one of the instances, to which I refer is not the experiment of one year only, but of more than twelve years in succession. Every farmer, who has a proper regard for his duty and interest, and the best interests of his fellowmen, should come to the determination on no consideration whatever, and in no form whatever, to

whom were men of families. In the course of the summer, he was informed that many of them were in debt; and on investigating their concerns, with surprise he ascertained the fact, that every one who was in the habit of using ardent spirits was involved to an extent beyond his ability to pay; and, with a satisfaction equal to his former surprise, he learned the additional fact, that those who made no use of spirits were in easy circumstances, and their children well provided for at school. Nor did a difference of wages, from seventy-five cents to one dollar and twenty-five cents per day, make any perceptible change in the situation of the former class of workmen.

"With this picture before him, Mr. Allaine was at once induced to prohibit the use of ardent spirits altogether in his shops, during working hours. But one person left his employ in consequence of this restriction; and this man had borrowed of Mr. Allaine, while in his service, upwards of 300 dollars to pay grocery-bills. In conclusion of his letter Mr. Allaine observes: 'I have great reason to be pleased with the happy effects of this regulation. I find my interest better served; and that those, who, from excessive drinking, had become of but little worth to me, and, in many instances, of less to their families, have now become able and steady; earn more money; and their families, as well as themselves, have expressed in a language not to be misunderstood, the many comforts, and the domestic happiness, which they enjoy in consequence.'" For several of the above notes I am indebted to the Annual Report of the Massachusetts Society for suppressing Intemperance, which is just published, with the Anniversary Discourse, by the Rev. Mr. Jenks.

admit within his territories this greatest and most subtle enemy to his peace and prosperity, and to the peace and prosperity of the Commonwealth.

It will not be deemed foreign from the occasion, if I call upon every good man, who hears me, to lend his aid in the suppression of this unnecessary and detestable vice; in the removal of this greatest disgrace of our virtuous community; and in notwithstanding the progress of this tremendous moral desolation. How deeply would the sympathies of the whole country be roused, if it was declared, that in some one of our most public places, and in broad day light, one of our fellow citizens, blest perhaps with property and education, and having those around him, who look with trembling agony for their subsistence and comfort and honour to his exertions and character, was about to commit deliberately an act of self destruction; and not merely to be allowed, but encouraged and assisted, to do it. How would every generous heart melt at the recital and kindle with indignation at the savageness of those, who could assist at the sacrifice! Yet, fellow citizens, this is no picture of the imagination: and in a state of society as enlightened, as virtuous, and as much blest as any ever was, these sacrifices under circumstances of tensfold exaggeration, are every day permitted; and accomplished by means though of gradual, yet of certain progress, and as degrading and brutal as can be imagined. I would not do any man a wrong, but for my part, I cannot but regard the retailing of spirituous liquors, excepting in public licensed taverns, and then only to travellers, the retailing of spirituous liquors to the inhabitants of the same town or neighbourhood to be drunken on the spot, as an employment among the most immoral of any that are tolerated by the customs of the community; and I consider the man, who knowingly and voluntarily contributes to seduce his neighbour, and to encourage his habits of intoxication, as in fact, if I were giving my verdict on oath I should say so, as criminal as the common murderer and

robber. Far better would it be in most cases for the wretched victim at once to take his life and his property than to entrap him by guile ; and to subject his poor wife and children to the bitterest agony, and to their feelings the deepest disgrace.

In the name of all that is dear to religion and humanity, of all that is valuable to us as men, as citizens, and as christians, I call upon those, who have influence in the community, upon those to whom the making of the laws, and those, to whom the execution of wholesome laws is intrusted, upon the guardians of the Commonwealth, to inquire what they can do, and to do every thing that can be done, to arrest the progress and to close the source of this terrible evil. It is only the pretence of indolence and inhumanity that nothing can be done. Let every good man in the community utterly withdraw his patronage and custom from places, where such practices prevail. Let the selectmen of our towns execute their duty and the courts of Sessions restrain the emission of licenses. Let the grandjurors present, as they are bound in oath, every violation of the laws, that comes within their cognizance. Let the legislators make it highly penal to sell liquors in any small quantity. Let all debts, contracted for spirituous liquor be made irrecoverable by any process of law, and the oath of the defendant, as in case of usury, be deemed a sufficient evidence of the fact. Let the price of a license be such as to render it profitable but for few persons to obtain it; and so that they may be compelled to contribute in a just proportion to the support of those, who by their intemperance have become a charge upon the town. The superior discretion and wisdom of those, to whom are committed the highest interests of the community, will suggest many other and better means of removing this evil and preventing its further progress. Never was there a subject more deserving of the consideration, and solicitude, and persevering exertions of the patriot and the christian.

Forgive me, fellow citizens, that I have strayed thus far from the proper duties of the occasion. We celebrate the Farmer's Holiday. It is an occasion on which we may contemplate with honest pride, and with exalted satisfaction, the happy condition of our Commonwealth. Agriculture, the first and noblest of all arts, and one of the most honest and honourable of employments, the great source of national power and prosperity, begins to excite among us an interest, proportionate to its importance; and to receive that patronage, which augurs well for its future prospects—Blest with a government, which secures to every man the rights of property, and the full enjoyment of the produce of his labour; with a soil and climate, with which we have no reason to be dissatisfied; for if they have not the mildness and the luxuriant fertility of other regions, they are exempt from many evils to which others are subjected; enjoying throughout the community the blessings of education, religion, and civil liberty; and with a yeomanry as enlightened, as moral, and as enterprising, as can any where be found, we may anticipate the most important and delightful results. In view of our fruits and our fields, our villages and our domestic retreats, we may exclaim with the Roman Poet, “Happy farmers, if they knew the blessings, which they possess.”*

* O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona nōrint, *Agricolæ*.—GEORG. LIB. II.
l. 458.

